/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[28] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[241] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[269] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).